

FINDING OF EMERGENCY

The Secretary of the Department of Food and Agriculture finds that an emergency exists, and that the foregoing amendment of a regulation is necessary for an immediate action to avoid serious harm to the public peace, health, safety or general welfare, within the meaning of Government Code Section 11342.545 and Public Resources Code Section 21080. The Secretary has also determined that this emergency clearly poses such an immediate, serious harm that delaying action by providing five working days advance notice to allow public comment would be inconsistent with the public interest, within the meaning of Government Code Section 11346.1(a)(3). Additionally, the agency is not aware of any entity or person who has requested a notice of regulatory action and that must be provided a five working days advance notice by sending them the finding of emergency and the proposed text of the regulation.

Description of Specific Facts Which Constitute the Emergency:

The Department of Food and Agriculture has found that oak mortality disease (sudden oak death) caused by a fungus, *Phytophthora ramorum*, presents a clear and present danger to the native stands of oak and other trees, the nursery industry, other agricultural commodities and plant life (including ornamental plantings) of California. Section 3700 implements a program to arrest the artificial spread of the disease. Continued action is necessary to contain and minimize the destructive impact of this pest and disease at the earliest possible time. On April 9, 2004, the Administrator of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) issued the first emergency order restricting the interstate movement of nursery stock from California nurseries located outside the area regulated under Section 3700.

On April 22, 2004, USDA, APHIS issued a new order that replaced that issued on April 9, 2004. On April 23, 2004, USDA, APHIS issued a clarification of its April 22, 2004 order. Through this last federal emergency order and its subsequent clarification, the USDA, APHIS identified additional plant species as regulated associated articles and as such, these associated articles are prohibited interstate movement from all California nurseries unless properly certified under the provision of the federal emergency order.

Since April 2004, the USDA, APHIS has issued a series of federal emergency orders that amended the articles regulated including on: 1) August 5, 2004, 2) December 21, 2004, 3)

August 3, 2005, 4) September 14, 2005, 5) November 15, 2005 (effective November 28, 2005), 6) February 10, 2006 (effective February 20, 2006), 7) March 14, 2006 (effective March 31, 2006), 8) July 17, 2006 (effective August 1, 2006), 9) September 21, 2006 (effective October 10, 2006) and a federal rule effective February 27, 2007. As a result, it was necessary to make emergency amendments to the State's regulation governing the intrastate movement of hosts and associated articles (nursery stock) to be consistent with these federal orders and the federal rule. Without a parallel State regulation that is substantially the same as the federal domestic quarantine and related federal orders, the USDA cannot regulate less than the entire State.

On August 22, 2007, the USDA issued a new federal order, which is effective on September 7, 2007. The USDA deemed this action necessary to amend its "associated hosts" list with additional plant taxa that can be infected by *P. ramorum*.

This federal order specifically affects the interstate movement of nursery stock from several states, including California. Under authority of this federal order, nurseries operating under a compliance agreement may continue to ship "Associated Plants" including these newly listed plants. Any nurseries containing these newly listed associated plants must be properly inspected, sampled and tested and placed under a Compliance Agreement to be able to move plants interstate.

This federal order adds two new plant species, *Garrya elliptica* (silk tassel tree, coast silk tassel) and *Mahonia aquifolium* (Oregon grape), to its "Plants Associated with *Phytophthora ramorum*" list. Therefore, to ensure harmonization with the federal order, these plants are also being added to Section 3700(c) as "associated articles."

As this federal order is effective on September 7, 2007, the Department is proposing these emergency amendments to Section 3700(c) to continue to provide the necessary regulatory framework for a State program to continue to arrest the intrastate and interstate spread of this disease and be in compliance with the August 22, 2007 federal order.

The Department proposes to amend this regulation because it is necessary to continue to have authority for an established statewide program in order to arrest the artificial spread of the disease to additional areas and harmonize the State's regulation governing the intrastate movement of nursery stock with the latest federal order that governs the interstate movement of California nursery stock. Immediate amendment of this regulation is necessary to mitigate the effects of this disease on the agricultural industry, which includes native tree stands. Additionally, it is necessary to immediately amend this regulation to avoid more stringent federal restrictions being placed against the State to prevent the interstate movement of articles and commodities that may carry *Phytophthora ramorum*. Without the immediate implementation of this proposed regulatory action, the USDA, APHIS may consider the entire state as infested with *Phytophthora ramorum*, rather than just the current 14 regulated counties. If this were to occur, there would likely be additional detrimental quarantine requirements directed against California commodities by our international trade partners.

The Department has determined that *Phytophthora ramorum* is a serious forest pest for which control is required to prevent further spread and harm to forests, parks, commercial and urban landscapes, and watersheds. This disease is known to occur in 14 California counties. Oak mortality disease is serious due to the fact that it kills tanoak, coast live oak, and black oak trees. The pest has been confirmed as infecting Shreve's oak and non-oak species such as rhododendron, huckleberry, bigleaf maple, California buckeye, California coffeeberry, manzanita, and toyon and other hosts causing foliar and stem disease symptoms.

Phytophthora ramorum has the capability of causing significant irreparable harm to California's agricultural industry and environment. While the Department's compliance with the California Administrative Procedure Act and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) are separate actions, they can be interrelated. Although adoption of specific regulatory authority can be the beginning of a project and therefore covered by CEQA, this regulation, for the reasons already set forth, constitutes a specific act necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency as authorized by Public Resources Code section 21080, subdivision (b) (4) and Title 14, California Code of Regulations Section 15269, subdivision (c). The regulation is also an action required for the

preservation of the environment and natural resources as authorized by Title 14, California Code of Regulations, sections 15307 and 15308.

The proposed emergency amendments of Section 3700(c) will establish two new associated hosts that are regulated. To protect California's agricultural industry, it is necessary to immediately regulate movement of hosts and potential carriers that may transfer the pest from the infested area. Therefore, it is necessary to amend Section 3700(c) on an emergency basis.

Authority and Reference Citations

Authority: Sections 407, 5321 and 5322, Food and Agricultural Code.

Reference: Sections 24.5, 5321 and 5322, Food and Agricultural Code.

Informative Digest

Existing law obligates the Department of Food and Agriculture to protect the agricultural industry in California and prevent the spread of injurious pests (Food and Agricultural Code, Sections 401 and 403). Existing law also provides that the Secretary may establish, maintain, and enforce such regulations as he deems necessary to prevent the spread of pests to protect California's agricultural industry (Food and Agricultural Code, Section 5322).

Section 3700. Oak Mortality Disease Control.

The proposed emergency amendment of Section 3700(c) will establish *Garrya elliptica* (silk tassel tree, coast silk tassel) and *Mahonia aquifolium* (Oregon grape) as associated articles under the articles and commodities covered by the regulation.

The effect of the changes to the regulation is to provide authority for the State to regulate movement of these new hosts, "associated hosts" and bole hosts and potential carriers of disease from the regulated area to prevent artificial spread of the pest to non-infested areas to protect California's agricultural industry and the environment.

Mandate on Local Agencies or School Districts

The Department of Food and Agriculture has determined that Section 3700 does not impose a mandate on local agencies or school districts, except that the agricultural commissioner of a county under regulation has a duty to enforce it. No reimbursement is required under Section 17561 of the Government Code because the 14 affected agricultural commissioners requested that they be added to the regulation.

Cost Estimate

The Department has also determined that no savings or increased costs to any state agency, no reimbursable costs or savings under Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of the Government Code to local agencies or school districts, no nondiscretionary costs or savings to local agencies or school districts, and no costs or savings in federal funding to the State will result from the proposed action.